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Labor, business forge new pro-jobs group

Message: ‘Supporting Industry, Manufacturing and Family Sustaining Jobs’

PITTSBURGH, Pa. – A coalition of unions, business and civic leaders today announced the creation of an organization to advocate for workers and families in traditional industries, while stressing the need for an all-inclusive economy for the region.

Called Pittsburgh Works Together, the organization launched during a press conference and rally at the Senator John Heinz History Center. It calls for an economy that combines newly emerging technology with the traditional energy and manufacturing industries that laid the foundation for the region’s way of life.

“We need an all-of-the-above economy, one that includes our emerging and existing industries,” said Jeff Nobers, who will lead the new group.

Nobers noted the important role that industry and manufacturing continue to have in today’s regional economy and how our core industries led the building of our city and region. These jobs offered sustainable middle-class careers for generations and continue to have a vital role in furthering the region’s economic growth.

“These type of careers and industries help create a truly diverse economy for all. We need these industries. They create opportunities for people to earn a substantial middle class income, raise their families, own a home, drive our economy and fulfill dreams,” Nobers said.

“We have tremendous opportunities ahead by working together and supporting major capital investments in state of the art technology and innovation in our traditional industries, while at the same time developing and building out an infrastructure across our region for emerging industries, such as solar and electric vehicles.”

The event featured the showing of a two-minute video telling the story of Pittsburgh's working families and the goal for an inclusive economy, as well as another video including testimonials from union workers who discussed their lives and work.

Joining Nobers were Tom Melcher, Business Manager for the Greater Pittsburgh Building Trades Council, representing 17 unions in the trades and construction industry; Nick Deluliis, President and CEO of CNX Energy; Scott Buckiso, Chief Manufacturing Officer of United States Steel; Earl Buford, CEO of Partner4Work, a regional workforce development agency; and Morgan O'Brien, President and CEO of Peoples Natural Gas.

In his prepared remarks, Melcher called for a common sense approach in support of the reemergence of the region's construction, energy and steel industries.

"We are committed to our people, our industries and the Pittsburgh region. The Building Trades are committed to providing high quality work for our region, our state and nation," Melcher said. "We know that we can have both -- good paying high quality jobs in industry and manufacturing, while protecting our shared environment, where our members live and raise their families."

O'Brien alluded to the hard times the region suffered 30 years ago, as unemployment in the region soared to Depression-era levels.

"For me, for all of us, one of the most important things is to make sure we protect the jobs that we have for the opportunities ahead of us, and to make sure those jobs stay here in the region," O'Brien said. "We've waited a generation. Let's not let this moment get away."

"Every industry plays a role in our economic revival. A diverse and vibrant local economy enriches our community and secures a future for generations to come. Pittsburgh has always been a leader in industry and manufacturing. Today, with the investments in technology and innovation, our young people can have a great career in these fields," Nobers said. "We need to support and grow every industry, so that we have a true economy for all." Nobers said.

Pittsburgh Works Together is co-chaired by both O'Brien and Melcher, and its mission is to advocate for an all-inclusive economic future that recognized the vital roles of both traditional and emerging industries.

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